



ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON

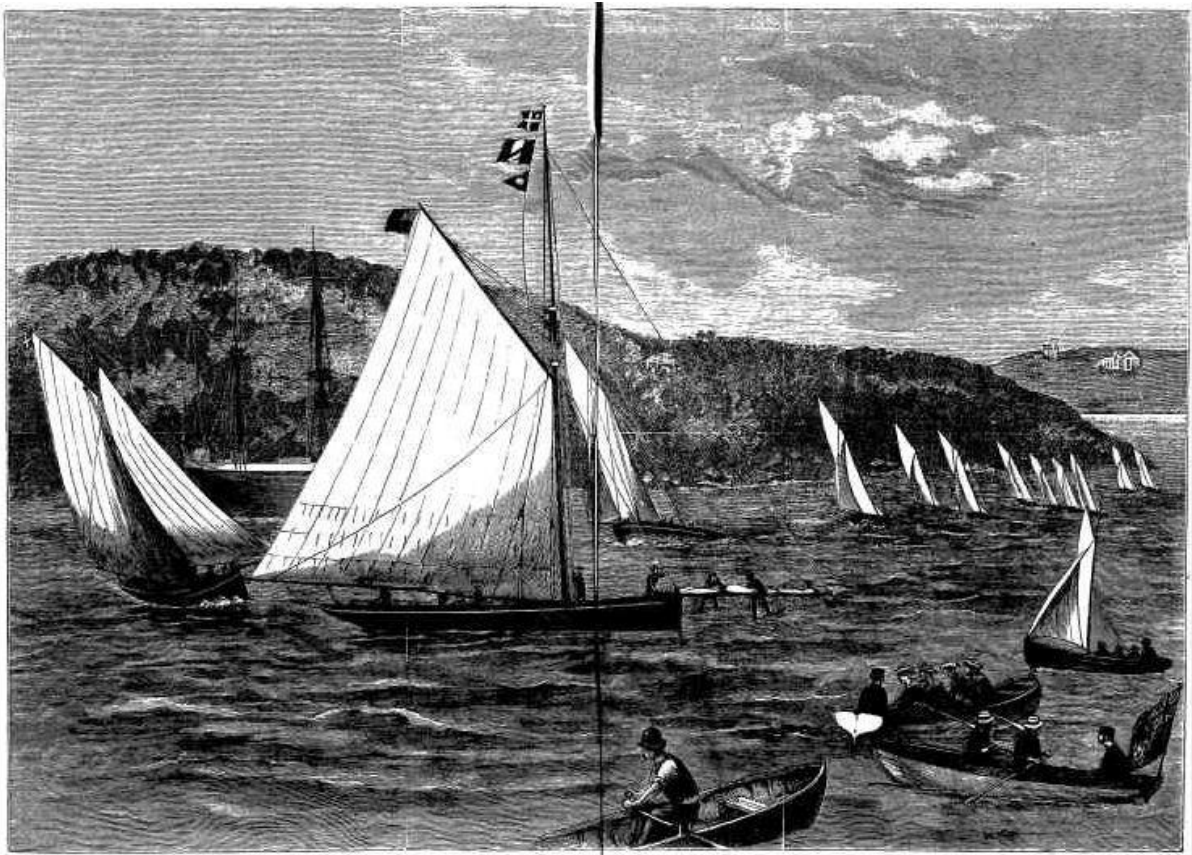
“Read all about it!”

The origins and early history of the Squadron – as reported in the Press of the day

Part 13: Opening Day

Monday, 18th October, 1886 – The Sydney Morning Herald

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OPENING OF THE SEASON BY THE ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.

The opening of the yachting season was celebrated on Saturday by the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron with a series of evolutions in the harbour and a luncheon at Cremorne. A better day could not have been selected for yachting, the day being cool and a stiff breeze blowing, before which the yachts bowled along at a merry pace. There was an excellent muster of boats, the following putting in an appearance - Magic (Commodore James R. Fairfax), Waitangi (Vice-commodore Milson), Sirocco (B. W. Knox), Meteor (J. Gilchrist), Mabel (J. R. Love), Ione (P. O. Williams), Assegai (G. F. Murnin), Peri (W. Laidley), Guinevere (S. A. Want), Violet (F. J. Jackson), Daphne (D. Wilkins), Carina (Captain Gascoigne), Sao (Dr. Milford), J. B. Boyen (C. S. Jowett), Iris, (R. L. Tooth). His Excellency the Governor and the Hon. Mr. Baring were aboard the Magic, while Admiral Tryon sailed in the Waitangi. The yachts having rendezvoused in Farm Cove were signalled by the commodore to follow in two divisions, and in that order they sailed around the Nelson and back and then reached down on the starboard tack to Shark Island. The order was then given to follow in line



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and in that formation, they tacked around the Island, and subsequently bore away to moorings under the land at Cremorne, where luncheon was laid in the pavilion, the catering being carried out by Compagnoni and Co.

The Commodore occupied the chair, the guests numbering nearly 100. Among those present were his Excellency the Governor on the chairman's right and Admiral Tryon (Rear Commodore of the Squadron) on the left, also Vice-Commodore Milson, the hon. Mr. Baring, Captain Gascoigne, Captain Quinn, Colonel Greenfield, Hon. G. Thornton, Mr. Critchett Walker (principal under-secretary), Captain Brooke, Messrs. W. J. Trickett, M.L.A., R. J. Black, E. W. Knox, E. R. Fairfax, J. M. Curtis, A. Oliver, Dr. Milford, P. O. Williams, S. R. Trail, T. W. Johnson, O. Bauer, W. Curnow, T. J. Jackson, R. E. Smith, R. L. Tooth, S. Cook, A. J. Soutar, H. H. Lang, F. B. Lark, S. A. Want, G. F. Want, Dr. Simpson, F. W. Ferguson, Captain Trouton, J. Gilchrist, W. Tucker, W. B. Mitchell, H. H. Lang, Q. L. Deloitte, R. J. Black, and S. Laidley.

The COMMODORE proposed "Her Majesty the Queen," which was duly honoured.

Mr. TRICKETT proposed, "H.R.H. the Prince of Wales," senior patron of the club, and in doing so he said that his Highness had always been a patron of every sport as well as of yachting. He hoped the time was not far distant when his Highness would visit those colonies, and if he did he would see a fleet of yachts that would be a credit to any harbour. The toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

Mr KNOX proposed "His Excellency the Governor," and the toast was received very warmly.

His EXCELLENCY, in reply, said he desired to return his grateful and respectful thanks for the manner in which the toast had been proposed and received. He hoped that the club would meet with every possible success.

Commodore FAIRFAX proposed "The Army and Navy." He said that as regards the British Army it could always give a good account of itself when called upon. In connection with this portion of the toast he might mention that they had recently added to the list of members the name of Captain Gascoigne, who was not far from Khartoum when General Gordon's career came to a termination. In speaking of the Navy, he could say that they intended to have something practical done. A piece of land at Dawes' Point had been handed over by the Government to trustees for the erection of a Royal Naval House upon it, in order that the men of her Majesty's fleet might be received and entertained in it when in port. When the whole squadron was in port there were from 1500 to 2000 men here, and there was every probability of the number of ships and men being greatly augmented. They desired to build a house where these men could have the comforts of a home, and he desired to enlist the sympathies of his Excellency in this deserving undertaking. There was a large amount to the credit of the Soudan Relief Fund, and he was able to state that some of the subscribers intended to hand over towards the erection of the Royal Naval House whatever was refunded to them. He intended to solicit donors to that fund to subscribe a portion of it towards the erection of the House. It was only right to say that the initiation of this movement was due in a considerable measure to Admiral Tryon, and when it was far enough advanced, they would ask the Admiral to lay the foundation-stone. The toast was received with great enthusiasm.

Admiral TRYON replied on behalf of the Navy. He said that the Commodore had alluded to a subject which he had very much at heart. It was very difficult to maintain a port both as a great military and a great commercial centre. In endeavouring to maintain this as one of the great ports of the world he thought that proper means should be provided the sailors for enjoying the comforts of a home when they went ashore on leave. With their wages and discipline, the want of such accommodation was unfair to the men. There was already one such institution as he referred to but although it was clean and tidy, it was utterly inadequate for the requirements of such a number of men. With reference to



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the increase in the Navy, to which the Commodore had referred, he hoped the time was not far distant when it would be realised. He had recently been reading of some important experiments, conducted by the French naval authorities in the Mediterranean, in which ironclads were opposed to torpedo boats, and he was glad to find that the class of vessels recommended for use in the colonies had been proved to be the best, not only on the decision of their own experts, but by the actual tests of a foreign nation. In some experiments conducted by the British naval authorities, at Pembroke, an ironclad fleet also successfully attacked a fortress protected by field guns, a mine field and torpedo boats, both parties using the electric light. One of the umpires, who was stationed on a torpedo boat, was completely prostrated by immersion and sea sickness and was unable to carry out his duties. This he considered was sufficient to show that all such services should be entrusted only to professional seafaring men, or to those who went to sea because they were thoroughly attached to it.

Colonel GREENFIELD (Indian army) replied on behalf of the Army.

The GOVERNOR proposed "Success to the Squadron," and, in doing so, said that Captain Gascoigne had received a communication from his father, in England, stating that he would be happy to present a challenge cup of 60 guineas to be sailed for by the yachts of the squadron. He begged to couple with the toast the name of the Commodore.

The COMMODORE, in reply, said that they could fairly anticipate a brilliant season, and he believed they would have such racing as had not been seen for years past. It was possible that, by the good offices of his Excellency and the Admiral, the squadron might obtain from the Admiralty permission to fly the white ensign.

Mr. A. OLIVER proposed "Success to Yachting," to which Dr. MILFORD replied, and this closed the list of toasts.

The company were then photographed by Messrs Kerry and Jonas, and the yachts and steamer shortly afterwards departed for home.





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Notes:

- Cremorne was named after Cremorne Gardens in the mother country. A pavilion and recreation area were established there and the only reminders today are some palm trees.
- Note the reference to Khartoum; at this time, the British were at war in Soudan (Sudan) and Egypt.
- In 2020, it is hard to think of Sydney as a Naval Base but in 1885, it was very real. Garden Island is a reminder.
- The RSYS always entertained Officers of the fleet at their formal functions.